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ABSTRACT

Intended for educators involved in developing secondary school reading programs, this paper describes a carefully balanced program implemented in the Wisconsin public school system for grades 7 through 12. Following a brief introduction to and rationale for the concept of a reading program that balances instruction in reading for skill development, reading for recreation, and reading for information in the content areas, the paper discusses each phase of such a program. The second part of the paper presents a diagnostic model for evaluating a balanced program, including the components for formal and informal assessment. The paper concludes with a selected reading list, categories of which correspond to the skills, recreation, content area reading, and evaluation stages of the program. (HTH)

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ORGANIZING AND EVALUATING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

Presented at

WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION
SPRING CONFERENCE

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ORGANIZING AND EVALUATING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

SUMMARY OF SLIDES

In the January, 1981, **Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal**, Richard Smith and Virginia Edds reported the perceptions of Wisconsin reading specialists in regard to their roles, responsibilities, and specifically, their training in graduate school as it prepared them for these roles and responsibilities. Smith and Edds found that one key area of concern expressed by specialists was in regard to those related to total program development and evaluation. (Smith and Edds, 1981)

TITLE

Overhead–
Table 3:
Smith & Edds

Within the total structure of reading program development, secondary programs in reading are relatively new. Unlike the elementary program which can be easily founded on a basal reading series, little specific curriculum exists for secondary schools. In **Teaching Children to Read**, Smith and Johnson (1980) present an approach for reading classroom organization . . . the balanced reading approach. This paper will describe a like approach to secondary reading program organization . . . an organization which is based on a balance between **reading for skill development, reading for recreation and application,** and **reading for information–the content area reading program.**

Overview
Balance:
–Skills
–Recreation
–Content Area

A second area of concern expressed by reading specialists in Wisconsin was program evaluation. In this model of secondary program organization, a diagnostic model is used for evaluation. This model will be described later in the paper.

BALANCED READING AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL–AN INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

A balanced reading program at the elementary level consists of three definitive strands: reading for skill development, reading for recreation and application, and reading in information groups–for gathering knowledge. (See Smith and Johnson, pages 240-253)

With some imagination, this same concept can be translated to the secondary level. As used here, secondary level implies grades seven through twelve. The goal of the total concept–as in the elementary counterpart–is balanced between the three strands. In the secondary model, the information strand is delivered through the content area reading program. At this level, the program is delivered through classes, reading centers, Instructional Media Centers (IMCs) and programs within the school. It should be noted that all components within a strand are balanced; that is, include skill, recreation, and information/content components.

STRAND A: READING FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN GRADES 7–12

READING FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Reading skills programs in junior highs, middle schools, and high schools are becoming more common in Wisconsin. In a balanced program at the secondary level, reading for skill development can be accomplished in various ways:

Basal Readers

A. Continuation of the Basal Reading Program

Several publishers of basal reading materials have added materials for grades 7 and 8. These can provide the foundation for skill development in the middle school/junior high.

Remedial Corrective Classes (photograph)

B. Remedial and Corrective Reading Classes

Specific curriculum can be developed for those students who have specific remedial or corrective needs. These classes can be required for some students, or chosen as electives. This is, of course, a local decision.

Developmental Centers/Labs (photograph)

C. Developmental Reading Classes

As in B above, specific curriculum can be developed for those students who desire further reading development. Also, as above, these developmental reading classes can be required for students in certain grades, all grades, or in a combination of the above.

The reader should also note that these skills can be delivered through reading centers as well as through specific reading classes.

Efficient Reading College Bound (photograph)

D. Efficient Reading Classes

Some students at the secondary level can benefit from classes in efficient reading. In most cases, this type of reading class would be an elective.

College Bound (photograph)

E. College-Bound Reading/Study Skills

Students who plan to go to college may wish to take specific sources to prepare them for the reading they will do in college. (Note: Where study courses are not offered, these skills can be included in the efficient reading or developmental reading curriculum.)

Peer Tutoring Paraprofessional Aides (photograph)

F. Reading Skills Tutorial Programs

At both the junior and senior high level, reading skills can be remediated and/or developed in tutorial programs. Some of these programs utilize peer tutors, while others utilize paraprofessionals.

RECREATION & APPLICATION

STRAND B: READING FOR RECREATION IN GRADES 7–12

Reading for recreation in a balanced secondary reading program includes three primary components: school-wide programs, the availability and involvement of an IMC or library, and elective courses which promote and reinforce recreational reading.

Sustained Silent Reading

A. School Wide Programs

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Programs are the most common school wide recreational reading. Although usually more popular (and perhaps successful) at the elementary level, there have been successful SSR programs at the secondary level.

Book Clubs

Book Clubs are another possibility for recreational reading promotion. Although these are usually conducted within classrooms, the concept can be implemented school wide through departments or homerooms.

B. IMC Support

IMC Materials Environment (photograph)

The secondary IMC can provide both the environment and materials for recreational reading development. The IMC must be accessible to students, and the materials in the IMC must cover a wide range of content at many different reading levels.

C. Elective Courses

Open Reading

Elective courses provide another outlet for recreational reading development. "Open Reading" is one such elective course at Beaver Dam Senior High School. (See course outline) In this course students are given an opportunity to read a wide variety of materials—that they choose. Further, the course provides a time and place for students to talk to others about their reading and reading interests.

STRAND C: READING FOR INFORMATION—THE CONTENT AREA READING PROGRAM

CONTENT AREA READING

Essential Skills & Application of Reading (photograph)

The development of content reading skills is essential to a balanced reading program. In this regard, the commitment and involvement of each teacher is needed for program success. To reach this goal, content area teachers may require some inservice. The scope and degree of this inservice is, of course, a matter of local concern.

The IMC is a valuable component in the content area reading program. Students (and teachers) will use the IMC for both application and research activities. Further, the IMC and its staff can be of service to the content strand teachers by providing materials and resources directly to the classroom.

C.A.$.H. BUYS SUCCESS

Tutorial programs can also support the content area classrooms. One such program is the C.A.S.H. (Content Area Study Help) program in Beaver Dam. Funded at this time by Title I, C.A.S.H. provides tutorial assistance to students in the content areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

SUMMARY: PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

A balanced secondary reading program is made up of skill development components, opportunities for recreational reading, and foundation reading skills in content areas.

Taken together, these components mesh to provide a sound approach to secondary reading organization.

EVALUATING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

PROGRAM EVALUATION: A DIAGNOSTIC MODEL

As noted earlier, program evaluation is a concern of 68% of the reading specialists responding to the Smith and Edds survey. On the same survey, 14.8% felt deficient in diagnosis of reading difficulties. In this section, program evaluation methods will be compared with those used in diagnosis of reading difficulties.

Overhead Table 3: Smith & Edds

Most reading specialists would agree that diagnosis is based on a number of components, both formal and informal. These same concepts are applied here to a program evaluation model which includes **formal assessment components** and **informal observations.**

Evaluation Is
–Ongoing
–Informal
–Formal

Diagnostic procedures and program evaluation have many common elements. Using a diagnostic method in program evaluation will provide a framework for a highly appropriate plan. Just as in diagnosis, the goals of this model are 1) to identify strengths and weaknesses, 2) to provide clues to the causes of these weaknesses, and, 3) to provide a plan for subsequent remediation for remediation or program development. At the same time, as program strengths are identified, they provide a foundation for the development of the program (No. 3 above). In addition, identification of strengths provide reinforcement to those implementing the program. Finally, as in diagnosis, program evaluation is on going . . . not a once a year project.

Formal Testing:
–NRT
–CRT
–CAT

(photograph)

FORMAL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Formal assessments can be a useful part of the overall program evaluation. As used in this context, formal assessments in reading refer to both standardized reading tests; e.g. The Nelson-Denny Reading Test or The Gates-McGinite Reading Tests, as well as reading subtests included in formal achievement batteries; e.g. The Iowa Tests of Educational Development or the Scott, Foresman Comprehensive Assessment Program Achievement Series.

The selection of these formal assessments will depend on the goals and needs of the program. Overall program evaluation needs might best be met with normed referenced instruments, whereas classroom evaluation needs might best be accomplished with criterion referenced tests.

Normed referenced tests (NRTs) provide data pertaining to broad categories of reading. Those areas most commonly included on this type of assessment are vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading. Normed referenced tests provide for both internal evaluation (curriculum analysis) and external evaluation (reports to school boards and/or state agencies).

Criterion referenced tests are a second type of formal assessment. CRTs provide data regarding student mastery of specified objectives. The key to criterion test reliability and validity is the match between the reading curriculum being tested and the objectives on the test itself. Criterion referenced tests are most useful for individual instructional planning.

Cognitive abilities tests are a third formal assessment type. On some achievement test batteries, cognitive ability scores—when matched with reading subtest scores—provide a potential reading score; i.e., the reading score of each student in relation to his or her ability. These anticipated reading levels can be useful in the evaluation of instructional techniques.

In summary, formal assessment is part of the total evaluation plan. As in diagnostic design, program evaluation should also include informal components.

INFORMAL COMPONENTS

Several informal indicators can be useful in total program evaluation. These include:

1. Teacher Observation

   The classroom teachers are responsible for the implementation and success of the reading program. Their perceptions should not be overlooked in developing a program evaluation plan.

Use Teachers' Perceptions

2. Reading Committee Function and Responsibilities

   The reading committee has several responsibilities in this model. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

   a. stating the goals of the reading program
   b. collecting informal evaluation data
   c. providing interpretations of both formal and informal data
   d. using collected data, to determine program strengths and weaknesses
   e. providing inservice for other teachers in reading methods and practices.

The reading committee is the "voice of the program." This concept is expressed in the following equation:

$V = N + R + K$

$$V = N + R + K$$

where

V = voice of the committee
N = number of members on the committee
R = representation on the committee
K = collective knowledge of the reading committee

Variables Defined:

Representation:

If the committee is to represent the whole of the program, then members of the committee must be involved in all strands of the program.

Committee Defined

A typical committee might include the following:

a. reading teachers
b. reading specialists
c. content teachers
d. librarians
e. administrators and counselors

Number:

The reading committee must be small enough to be a close knit unit—where communication is facilitated. If the committee is too large, this communication may be inhibited.

Knowledge:

Knowledge of reading need not be a prerequisite for committee membership. However, it is assumed that members of the committee will have a commitment to reading instruction in all areas of the curriculum.

Other Informal Aids

3. Other Informal Indicators

a. Library use:

A successful program promotes students who read. One indicator of this success can be seen in the use of the library.

b. Content grades:

Success in content classes may be another indicator of reading program quality.

c. Course enrollments:

Do students freely elect reading courses? If so, which courses are consistently taken, which are not?

OVERVIEW SLIDE

SUMMARY

An overall plan for organization and evaluation is crucial for reading program success. A **balanced reading approach**, as presented in this paper--including reading for skill development, recreational reading opportunities, and the development of essential content reading skills—can provide the basic foundation for program organization. Ongoing program evaluation—viewed as a **diagnostic problem**—is based on both formal and informal data. As in diagnosis, the goals of this evaluation model are 1) to identify program strengths and weaknesses, 2) to correct weaknesses, and 3) to reinforce strengths.

Taken together, a balanced reading approach and diagnostic evaluation plan provide a framework for organizing and evaluating secondary reading programs.

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Percentage of Respondents Checking Specific Areas of Deficit in Graduate Programs

Percent	Area
16.4	Developmental reading
10.2	Remedial reading
66.8	K-12 program development
14.8	Diagnosis of reading difficulties
14.8	Standardized testing
68.0	K-12 program evaluation
22.5	Record keeping and report writing
56.1	Coordination of reading programs
48.8	Leadership training
17.2	Literature for children and young adults
57.4	Field experience in consulting and supervision

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ORGANIZING AND EVALUATING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS (Michael French)

RECREATIONAL READING STRAND: ELECTIVE COURSE
"Open Reading" Outline (Beaver Dam High School)

OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage the habit of general reading in a wide area of disciplines and genres.
2. To expose the student to a wide variety of reading material.
3. To provide the student with time each day to read books of his/her own choosing.
4. To allow the student to experience reading as pleasant and productive.
5. To allow the student into mental dialogue with and in response to the author and his/her ideas.
6. To allow and encourage the student to converse with others (students and teacher) about personal reading.

Basic Texts:

There are no basic class texts. Each student chooses material based on personal interests and ability.

Basic Course Requirements:

Reading: Each student is required to read at least one book from each of the following areas:
1. Fiction
2. Non-fiction
3. Biography
4. Poetry and/or Drama

Speaking: Students will conference with the instructor upon completion of each book or reading project. Students will also discuss their reading with the other students in the class.

Writing: Students will keep a weekly journal of directed, focused writing. Students are encouraged to write about their reading, or topics related to it.

Class Activities Designed to Stimulate Reading:

1. Library tours by librarian to familiarize students with local facilities and materials.
2. Book/talk display by librarian or instructor high-lighting new books coming into the library.
3. Book talks and displays of genres . . . for students who are less familiar with various types; e.g. biography, journalistic non-fiction, etc.
4. Guest speakers from community—with interests in reading and/or writing.
5. Taped book discussions with other students reading the same book or author . . . "Talk Show" format.
6. Student card file, collecting responses to books read in class.
7. Establishment of a classroom paper-back library.
8. Participation in a paper-back book club to encourage personal ownership of books.
9. Oral book reports, panel discussions, reports on non-fiction.
10. Student-built reading bulletin boards.
11. Viewing of TV programs designed to stimulate reading; e.g. PBS "Matter of Fiction" or "The Short Story."
12. Viewing of TV drama specials based on novels.

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Michael French

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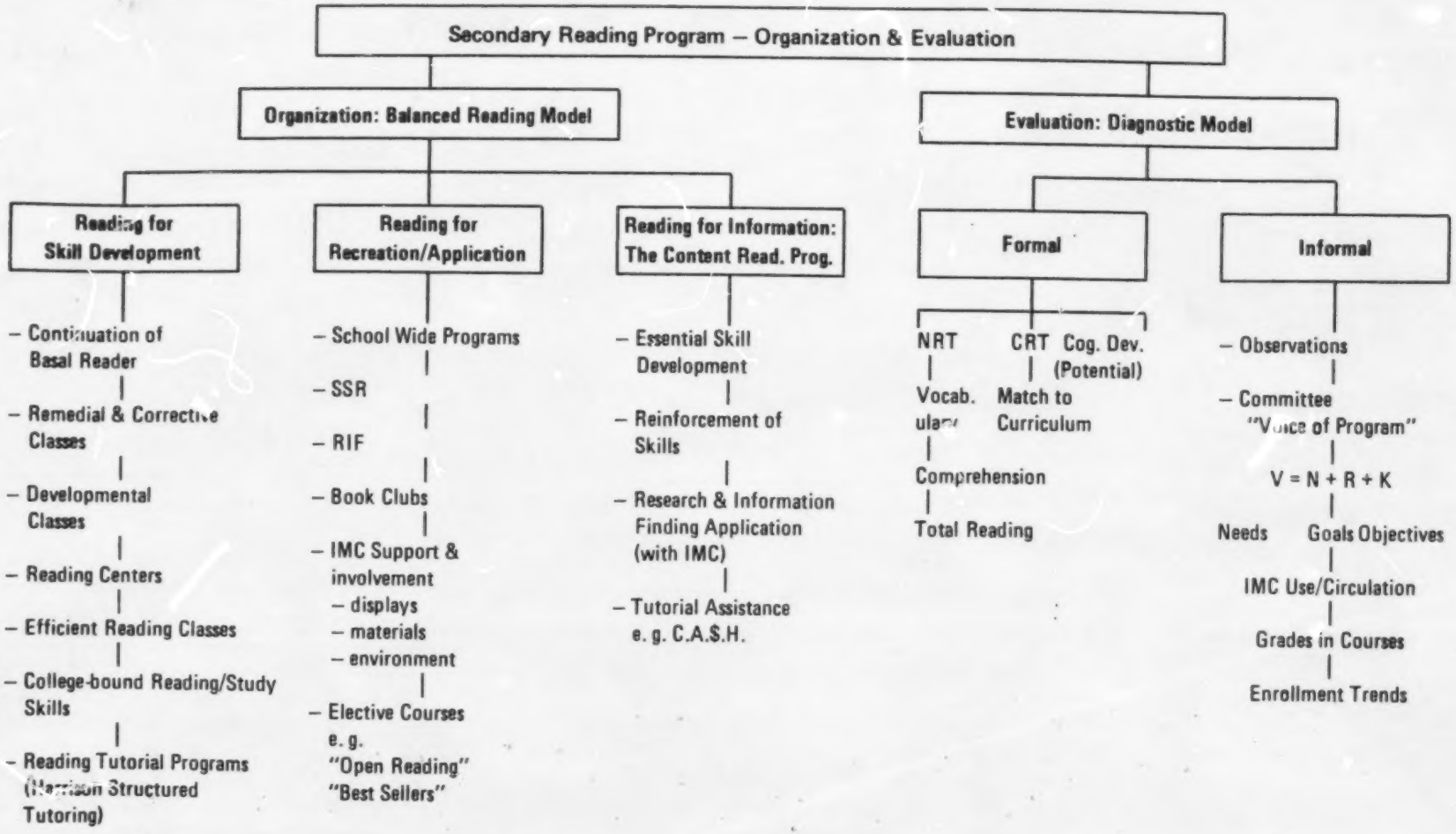

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